

2nd Air Force leader to manage Air Force budget

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News editor

Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers, who relinquishes command of 2nd Air Force Wednesday, feels comfortable and well-prepared to assume his new duties as the Air Force's budget director at the Pentagon.

"I started off as a finance officer and retrained as a budget officer," General Flowers said in an Aug. 27 interview. "After 20 years of core budget training and several years at the Pentagon, I'll be back to my core (Air Force Specialty Code) as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller."

Making financial management history

General Flowers is the first financial management general to serve as a numbered Air Force commander.

"When I was promoted to major general in 2007, I suspected the opportunity would come for me to serve as the Air Force budget director," he said.

"As fate would have it, and grace and mercy and a lot of people taking care of me, I'm as prepared as I can be for my new responsibilities," he remarked, noting that his tenure as Air Education and Training Command's comptroller also gave him valuable experience to bring to his new position. "Opportunities and various assignments have given me a good perspective for the next position."

General Flowers explained that there are only four general officers in the financial management career field, and when one moves into a new position, one or more of the others move also.

"The general I'm replacing has been selected for promotion to lieutenant general and is going to be the J-8F — the director of force structure and resources for the joint staff," the general said. "He'll be doing the same kind of job that I did for U.S. Special Operations Command."

No impossible challenges

General Flowers noted that his new job would be challenging, but "none of the challenges are insurmountable. The priorities of the Air Force have been laid out in the president's budget, and it's our job to support it and work Air Force resourcing issues.

"There's nothing better than command," 2nd Air Force's outgoing leader conceded, "but if I have to do something other than command, to be the director of the Air Force budget is a great opportunity. Being responsible for a \$115 billion budget isn't something you get to do every day."

The general says his experiences in the training arena, both at 2nd Air Force and as commander of the Air Force Officer Accession and Training Schools at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., have



Photo by Adam Bond

General Flowers is headed to the Pentagon to serve as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller.

given him valuable insights that will serve him well in his new position.

With the command of 2nd Air Force, he became responsible for basic military training and technical training, giving him a deeper understanding of the kind of recruits coming into the Air Force.

"We oversee 2,500 courses and 193 pipelines to do the Air Force's and nation's business," he said of his command, which includes training wings at Keesler; Sheppard, Lackland and Goodfellow AFBs, Texas; a training group at Vandenberg AFB, Calif.; and a network of 92 field training units around the world.

Living 2nd Air Force's core mission

General Flowers attended five schools under the 2nd Air Force umbrella.

"I attended basic military training and basic officer training at Lackland, so I have lived our core mission from an Airman and officer's perspective, not just from being taught it or hearing about it," he emphasized.

General Flowers is especially proud of several areas of accomplishment during his tenure at 2nd

Change of command

Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers relinquishes command of 2nd Air Force to Maj. Gen. Mary Kay Hertog, 9 a.m. Wednesday on the parade field behind the Levitow Training Support Facility.

Air Force — lowering the BMT attrition rate, improving the manning for the military training instructor career field, meeting increased technical training demands and continuing to improve joint expeditionary training efforts.

The BMT attrition rate has been reduced from 10 percent two years ago to 6 percent now.

"We've made a lot of headway and improvements in MTI manning," General Flowers stated. "In February, our MTI manning was at 62 percent, but in October, we'll be at 86 percent."

Meeting training demands

On the technical training front, the 2nd Air Force leader is pleased with how his training team has met significant challenges.

"We're bringing more than 4,000 new people into the Air Force during FY09, with another 5,200 in FY10 and about 5,000 more in FY11," General Flowers remarked. "We'll be bringing the Air Force inventory from about 311,000 to about 332,000 over a four- or five-year period, and every one of those folks will come through 2nd Air Force."

"None of this was programmed to occur when it did, so we had to figure out how to absorb this additional training and do it according to a timeline dictated by the requirements of the Air Force," he continued. "There was some increase in instructors, but not nearly the number that was needed at that time. We made a lot of adjustments with this increased workload. Our training team stepped up and did a phenomenal job, and I'm very proud of them."

Joint expeditionary training

General Flowers has supported the joint expeditionary training programs that 2nd Air Force manages which were initiated by his predecessor, Lt. Gen. Michael Gould.

"Three years ago, about 60 percent of the Airmen deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan were getting less than 30 days notice," General Flowers said. "Today, it's rare for 30 to 40 people, much less 60 percent, to get less than 30 days notice."

"We're responsible for scheduling and equipping our Airmen who deploy," he continued. "All

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the training is done for us, except a little that we do at Lackland, at four Army posts with an average daily student load of 700 to 800 Airmen in training. A week from now, five Army posts will have about 1,000 Airmen in training.”

General Flowers commented, “What our Airmen are learning is what they need to survive and to do their jobs in combat – combat skills training, police skills training teams, teaching officer training so the Iraqis and Afghans can implement their own Officer Training Schools and other skills that will enable these nations to become more independent in their military training.”

The general and his wife, Ida, a native Mississippian, have enjoyed their time at Keesler.

“Living here has been a great experience,” he observed. “What Keesler and the Mississippi Gulf Coast have to offer is unique. The hospitality shown by this community has been wonderful.”

General Flowers knows his successor, Maj. Gen. Mary Kay Hertog, and says she’s no stranger to 2nd Air Force.

“She’s been a group and wing commander at Lackland, and she understands this business very well,” he remarked. “Second Air Force won’t miss a beat under her command.”

General Flowers’ parting message to Keesler and 2nd Air Force is simple and to the point.

“There’s nothing better than command, but if I have to do something other than command, to be the director of the Air Force budget is a great opportunity. Being responsible for a \$115 billion budget isn’t something you get to do every day.”

— General Flowers

“You’re only as good as the folks around you — great organizations focus on the small things and hire great help,” he said. “How we think drives how we act. If we think we’re good, we’ll act like we’re good. If we don’t, we won’t. Think that you’re good, act like you’re good, and the results will be reflected in performance and mission accomplishment.”



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Survivors share stories during Breast Cancer Awareness Month

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News editor

It could be your wife, your mom, your sister, your girlfriend, your best friend, your coworker ... breast cancer knows no boundaries. Aside from non-melanoma skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Breast cancer is the No. 1 cause of cancer death in Hispanic women, and the second most common cause of cancer death in white, black, Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native women. No one knows how many Keesler women ... military, civilian, family members, retirees ... are battling this disease. These survivors are working hard to accomplish the mission while restoring their health. As Breast Cancer Awareness Month draws to a close, several share their stories.

Marsha Baronich

Marsha Baronich, 335th Training Squadron, is one of the 194,280 people who will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year. Of that estimate from the National Cancer Institute, 192,370 are women and 1,910 are men. Mrs. Baronich, who's spent her entire 31-year federal career at Keesler, was diagnosed with breast cancer in May after a routine mammogram. "The diagnosis was, without a doubt, the most frightening thing I've ever had to face," she said. "My initial reaction was shock, but I've tried to have a good attitude about it because I realized I'm not alone in this diagnosis."



Photo by Kemberly Groue
Mrs. Baronich is secretary to the 335th TRS commander, Maj. Tabetha Clark.

"I prayed a lot for myself, and God replaced my fear with peace — that's when I knew everything would be OK," she continued. "Decisions have to be made fairly quickly, but everyone was very supportive in giving me the time to make the right decisions for me." Mrs. Baronich opted to have a single mastectomy. Since the cancer had not moved into the lymph nodes, chemotherapy and radiation weren't required. She'll take oral medication for five years and see her oncologist every three months for the next two years, then every six months after that. "Cancer affects not just the person diagnosed, but her family and friends as well," she pointed out. "My husband and children were very concerned, but very supportive. We value the times we spend together and realize how important it is to have loving family support. My friends and coworkers added their prayers and support, and for that I feel very fortunate." Mrs. Baronich says her doctors can't prove what caused her cancer, but she's read many articles since her diagnosis that indicate the three most important things in battling cancer are exercising regularly, eating healthy foods and getting regular checkups and mammograms. Saturday, she joined squadron members for the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk in Biloxi.

Lana Smith

After 11 years as a personnel officer, Lana Smith joined the civilian work force in 1995 and has spent all but four of the last 14 years at Keesler. She's a community readiness consultant at the airman and family readiness center. In 2005, 20 years after her oldest sister died of breast cancer, Ms. Smith was diagnosed with the same disease. Her reactions were, "What now? I have my daughter and mom and grandchildren counting on me ... I don't want to die ... this sucks." Ms. Smith initially had a single mastectomy to remove the cancer, and later had her other breast removed for cosmetic reasons and because of her family history of breast cancer. Eight chemotherapy sessions followed, two weeks apart, with an injection to stimulate blood cell replenishment after each treatment. She takes an oral anti-cancer drug daily and has checkups with her oncologist every six months. "Local friends were sympathetic and supportive — one co-worker came and mowed my lawn, others gave chocolates and a gift certificate to a bookstore and church choir friends brought meals," she recalled.

Since her diagnosis, Ms. Smith has conducted a personal crusade to heighten breast cancer awareness. She's participated in the ACS Relay for Life and Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk and has a "Survivor" pink ribbon magnet on her car. She visits Web sites to keep tabs on breast cancer research and assistance, and even distributed "feel your boobies" postcards to stress the importance of self-examination in detecting tumors. "Just because mammograms don't catch 100 percent of breast cancers doesn't mean you shouldn't have them," she observed. "And some cancers are fast growing and can best be found by monthly self-exams." Her emphatic advice is summed up in two words — ask questions. "If something doesn't feel right, ask questions," Ms. Smith urged. "Don't be afraid of making your doctor mad — it's your body, your life, your health we're talking about! You're paying him or her — if you don't like them, switch providers." "Let your family and friends help out, even if you feel OK doing your own housework, yard work and driving — it makes them feel better and keep you from becoming over-tired," she recommended. "If married, have your husband talk with other spouses — they can feel helpless, angry, afraid, but may not be able to talk to you about it."



Photo by Kemberly Groue
Ms. Smith briefs her co-workers, Master Sgt. Ernesto Alvendia and John Lowe, on employment and education programs for military spouses.



Courtesy photo
Ms. Singleton joined Sergeant Luster at the 81st Training Group's annual awards banquet in February.

Jessie Singleton

Tech. Sgt. LaKeitha Luster feels blessed to have been with her mom, Jessie Singleton, every step of the way since her mom's breast cancer diagnosis in September 2008. "I was at every appointment that led up to the surgery and every appointment after the surgery," said Sergeant Luster, a weather instructor in the 335th TRS since March 2006. A native of Natchez, Miss., she's been in the Air Force for 16 years. Ms. Singleton, now a licensed master social worker in Biloxi, felt two lumps during a self-exam in March 2008 and her gynecologist found three lumps during a subsequent physical. A mammogram, ultrasound and biopsy diagnosed breast cancer. "Shock and disbelief" was Sergeant Luster's reaction to her mother's diagnosis. "I was numb for a very long time — I wouldn't allow myself to feel anything. I think I was in denial until her first chemo treatment." Ms. Singleton had a lumpectomy and some of her lymph nodes were removed. She began chemotherapy two weeks before last Thanksgiving and concluded in May, followed by seven weeks of radiation therapy Monday through Friday that ended in July. She recently had follow-up blood work, a bone scan and a CT scan. "I come from an emotional family — they were frightened and didn't know what to say — I think they had a hard time seeing the 'strong sister' sick," she remembered. "They had a difficult time seeing me without any hair, but one of my nieces cut her hair short to show her solidarity with me. I didn't realize that one of my sisters was afraid to go to the doctor because of what I was going through." Ms. Singleton moved to Gautier to be with her daughter while she completed radiation treatment at Singing River Hospital. "My mother is very independent and it took some prodding, but I convinced her to move in with me and made her my dependent," Sergeant Luster explained. "She stayed with me for 10 months before she moved to Biloxi. "I work with the best group of people at Keesler — or the entire Air Force, for that matter," she stressed. "I never had to fight for a single day off to take my mother to any appointment, and my co-workers immediately stepped in to cover for me when needed, no questions asked. "They helped me move her from Hattiesburg," she continued. "Master Sgt. Sharon Utsey, my flight superintendent, works long hours and has a husband and kids at home, but she still drove all the way to my house to walk my dogs and make sure they were OK."

Just a year ago, two weeks after her lumpectomy, Ms. Singleton joined her daughter and others by walking three miles at the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk at Biloxi's Town Green. She also wrote two newsletters during her treatment to bring others into her journey. "I've learned that since my mom has breast cancer, my likelihood of being diagnosed goes way up, so I take my self-exams much more seriously," Sergeant Luster pointed out. "I also talk with my students, both male and female, to help them understand how important it is to take care of themselves. She wishes she had joined a support group for family members of survivors. "People underestimate what a person goes through when supporting a family member," Sergeant Luster commented. "No one knows what it's like to see your mom's bald head for the first time or to listen to her throw up because of chemo side effects. They don't know what it's like to watch her sleep for days on end because the chemo wears her out. No one understands this but another family member of a survivor. I think talking to someone who understood what I was going through would have helped me tremendously." Senior Airman Alonda West The incidence of breast cancer increases steadily as a woman ages. However, even younger women have to take the threat of breast cancer seriously. Senior Airman Alonda West, 81st Mission Support Group, had a breast cancer scare when she was only 15 years old. "I noticed a lump in my left breast every time I showered that kept growing larger and larger," recalled Airman West, who's been at Keesler since 2006. "Our family physician sent my mother and me to a specialist. He diagnosed it as a tumor — since it was solid and not liquid-filled, it had to be removed." The mass was the size of a golf ball. After it was removed, the tissue was sent off for testing to determine if it was malignant. Fortunately, it was benign. "I still have a scar that reminds me of the 'what-ifs,'" Airman West admitted. "I examine myself frequently, but I still live with the fear that one day I'll find something that wasn't there before." Airman West emphasized that breast cancer doesn't discriminate against age. "So many people hear about breast cancer and automatically think of older or middle-aged women," she remarked. "Just because a woman's breast isn't quite fully developed, it doesn't mean that she can't be a victim of this disease."



Photo by Kemberly Groue
Airman West is part of the 81st Mission Support Group support staff.

Nancy Holliday

CSC purchasing manager Nancy Holliday transferred here from Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., three months ago. She owes her breast cancer diagnosis to a mistake by an inexperienced mammogram technician when Ms. Holliday had her first mammogram at age 40 in 2007. "The new technician was still learning the 'quirks' of the machinery," Ms. Holliday remembered. "A mammogram consists of many different views, or 'slices,' and she took a slice that was much lower than the normal range. Not knowing what she did, she sent all 'slices' to the radiologist to be read and the lump was found in the slice that wasn't supposed to be taken. The radiologist said if the 'mistake' hadn't happened, it would have been very difficult to find with self examination. God blessed me that day." Ms. Holliday described her diagnosis as "pure shock." "I'm a single mother of four and the sole source of income," she said. "I was scared to death I wouldn't have been able to take care of my children. The word 'cancer' has always been associated with death. It terrified me that I might be there to see my children grow up. "I tried very hard not to allow my sickness to affect my children — they didn't know the extent of my illness until my surgery," Ms. Holliday said. "They had already lost one parent and I didn't want them to feel like they were going to lose another."

After nine weeks of intravenous chemotherapy, the tumor and two adjacent lymph nodes were removed. Then she went through nine more weeks of intravenous chemo and four weeks follow-up on a chemo pill. After a mammogram every three months the first year, she now has one every six months. At the end of the third year of recovery, she'll return to annual mammograms. Ms. Holliday's managers and co-workers supported her when she decided to work during chemotherapy. "The busiest time for purchasing is September, the end of the year for the government," she remembered. "I was in full blown chemo, but I didn't miss one day. I kept a garbage can close by just in case. My co-workers hounded me regularly to eat." Ms. Holliday is involved with the Susan Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and participated in Saturday's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk. "My children all painted their fingernails pink to honor me and other survivors," she remarked. "My sons say if someone tries to make fun of them, they just say, 'It's for my Mom — this reminds me how close I was to losing her and I'm proud to be pink!'" "Without yearly mammograms, monthly self-exams and the proper education, breast cancer can go undetected until sometimes it's too late to do anything about it," Ms. Holliday emphasized. "Breast cancer is curable — I'm living proof."

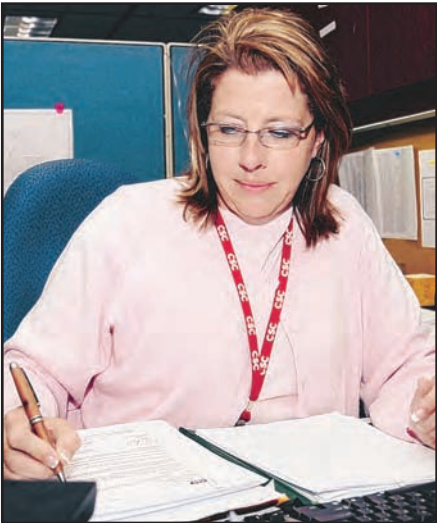


Photo by Kemberly Groue
Ms. Holliday is a single mom of three sons and a daughter.

Susan Griggs, Keesler News editor, was diagnosed with abnormal precancerous breast tissue nearly seven years ago and chose to have a double mastectomy as a preventive measure. She took tamoxifen, an anti-cancer drug, for five years and has a checkup with her oncologist annually as a precaution.

Keesler hockey enthusiasts hit the ice

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News editor

Steamy south Mississippi seems like an unlikely haven for ice hockey, but the Mississippi Gulf Coast Hockey League claims at least four active-duty Keesler Airmen among its most avid players.

Many of the adults who hit the ice at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum in Biloxi on Sundays and select weeknights from October through March are military members. The ice rink at the coliseum, the only one on the coast, is only available when the Mississippi Surge of the Southern Professional Hockey League is playing.

On a recent weekend, Keesler's Paul Braun, Jerome Dyer, Donald Killian and Oscar Gonzales hit the ice with the league's other hockey enthusiasts of varying ages and skill levels.

Braun has been a paralegal in the base legal office for three years. Dyer is a network management infrastructure instructor in the 333rd Training Squadron, and Killian and Gonzales are assigned to the 335th TRS.

"I've been playing here since 2007," said Braun, who hails from Chicago. "I was very surprised when I heard they had a minor league ice hockey team and a men's adult ice hockey league down here."

Because of a lack of ice rinks, Braun played pond hockey as he was growing up. The 16-year Air Force member played in a roller hockey league when he was stationed at Holloman Air Force Base, N.M. and Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England. He also played in a floor hockey league when he was stationed at Nellis AFB, Nev.



Photos by Kemberly Groue
Top, Killian
Center, Gonzales and Dyer
Right, Braun

Braun, who came to Keesler three years ago, plays defense and enjoys the toughness of the sport.

"Hockey demands good hand and eye coordination," the Chicago Blackhawks fan explained. "It definitely benefits my physical training program. It's a great conditioning sport and works a lot of different muscles."

During the off-season, Braun rollerblades and practices skating and stick handling.

"Just watching hockey in person and watching it on TV are great ways to learn the game," he added.

Dyer, who's been on active duty for nearly 10 years, grew up about 30 minutes north of Philadelphia. He began playing ice hockey about 22 years ago and has played off and on for the past 10 years. He plays all forward positions — center, left wing and right wing.

"I like everything about the sport other than the cost to play it," Dyer said. "I've played since I was about 10 years old in various leagues



all the way through high school and played couple of years in college in Binghamton, N.Y. I was also an assistant coach for a couple of years for another school's junior varsity hockey teams."

When Dyer arrived at Keesler three years ago, he was surprised to find out there was a recreational hockey league, "but I didn't have time to play my first two years here."

Dyer, a Detroit Redwings fan, agrees with Braun that ice hockey requires many skills, including "speed, quickness, agility, upper and lower body, endurance, and at least above average hand-eye coordination for shooting, passing and stick handling — not to forget skating, which may be the most important."

As far as the Air Force's physical fitness requirements, "hockey has always felt like a much better workout than running," Dyer pointed out. The only thing a person might need to do is lift some weights or do some pushups for upper body strength ...

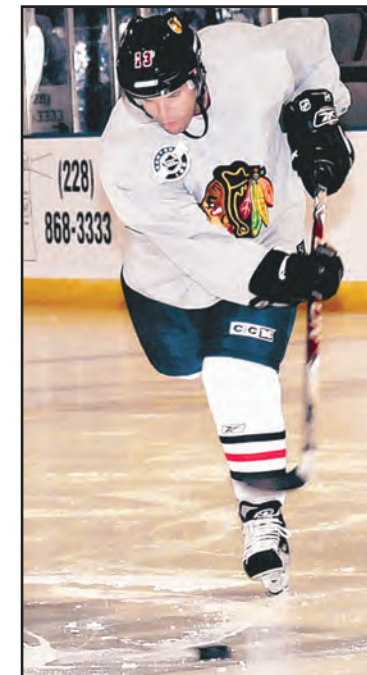
playing hockey will take care of the rest."

Dyer, who has three children, encourages parents with children interested in ice hockey to give them a chance to play if they can afford it. The Gulf Coast Youth Hockey Association offers hockey for beginning skaters up to 18-year-olds. For more information, visit <http://www.gcyha.org>.

"The younger they learn, the better and easier it will be for them," he remarked. "Hockey can be violent and a little dangerous, but much less than football — I've played both sports. In hockey, the physical contact is not as constant and the injuries are usually less severe. If most kids played hockey at a younger age, it would become a much more popular sport here in the United States."

"Every sports fan should try and get tickets to see a National Hockey League game live at least once," he added. "Games are much better live than on TV."

Gonzales, who grew up in



Odessa, Texas, has played ice hockey for 12 years. He played high school hockey, recreation department leagues and at every base's he's been assigned in 7½ years in the Air Force. He plays all position except goalie, both offense and defense.

"I love the complication of the game — it isn't a game you can just pick up a stick and slap some skates on and play," he observed. "It takes multiple years to learn how to play — it took me almost a year just to develop a functional 'hockey stop.'"

"You name it, hockey requires it — you have a lot to think about if you're slapping around a heavy round piece of rubber that goes really fast around the ice," Gonzales continued. "First and foremost, you have to have the ability to stay up on skates — you also need situational awareness for balance and a lot of coordination."

He said an intense sport like hockey is a great physical fitness tool.

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"You have to use a lot of lower body muscles just to stay up on your skates, then you have to have upper body strength for puck handling and shooting," Gonzales stated. "It's a great full body workout. Every time I play, I'm sore the next day. Even though I play a lot, it still hurts."

His favorite pro hockey team is the Dallas Stars.

"If they hadn't moved from Minnesota to Texas back in the late '80s or early '90s, I wouldn't have had the chance to play hockey being from west Texas," he commented.

For more information, log on to <http://www.mississippigulfoasthockey.com>; call John Goul, 313-0035, or get in touch with any of the Keesler players.

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SCORES AND MORE

Basketball

Varsity men's and women's teams — tryouts to be announced. Teams play in Southeastern Military Athletic Conference. Season started in November. Coaches needed. For more information, call 377-2444 or 377-3056.

Bowling

Intramural league

Team	Won	Lost
81st DS	48.0	24.0
332nd TRS	47.0	25.0
Dough Boys	46.0	26.0
81st LRS	43.0	29.0
336th TRS	42.0	30.0
81st MDSS	42.0	30.0
81st SFS	42.0	30.0
81st FSS	40.0	32.0
338th TRS-A	38.0	34.0
403rd MXS	34.0	38.0
338th TRS-B	32.0	40.0
334th TRS	28.0	44.0
335th TRS	26.0	46.0
333rd TRS	22.0	50.0
81st TRSS	20.0	52.0

Other

Bowling fund raisers — for more information, call 377-2817.

Youth bowling — for any child old enough to throw the bowling ball down the alley. League meets 9:30 a.m. Saturdays; instruction available. For more information, call 377-2817.

Glow bowling — 9 p.m. Fridays and 7 p.m. Saturdays.

Lunch and bowl special — 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays-Fridays. Bowl for \$1 a game plus \$1 for shoes.

Team-building special — 1-3 p.m. Mondays-Wednesdays, 1-5 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays. Bring your employees bowling for \$1 a game plus shoe rental. For reservations, call 377-2817.

Club member special — show current club card Thursdays and bowl for \$1.50 per game; free shoe rental.

Birthday party package — 1:30-3 p.m. or 3:30-5 p.m. Saturdays. Basic party with bowling and food \$8.95 per child. Mid party, including table supply and T-shirt, \$11.95 per child. Premium party with games and a pin, \$15.95 per child. Reservations required.

Fitness centers

Intramural basketball registration — Regular division and 30 and over division. Letters of intent due today. Coaches meeting 3:30 p.m., Wednesday, at Vandenberg Community Center. For more information, call 377-2444.

Free fitness classes — boot camp, self-defense, cycling, yoga, step aerobics, Tae Kwon-do, core fitness, kick boxing and pilates at Dragon Fitness Center. For more information, call 377-2907.

Free fitness testing, exercise prescription and personal training — at Blake, Dragon and Triangle Fitness Centers. For more information, call for appointment.

Free blood pressure machines — available for use at all fitness centers.

Boxing room — Triangle Fitness Center. Six heavy bags, three speed bags and one double-end bag. Boxing gloves available.

Fit to fight incentive program — Dragon slayers, dragon readers, dragon gliders and dragon riders available at no cost at Blake, Dragon and Triangle fitness centers. Awards presented. For more information, contact the fitness center of choice.

Parent/child fitness room — at Dragon Fitness Center. Workout equipment; play area for ages 6 months to 7 years.

Massage appointments — at Triangle Fitness Center. For more information, call 348-6698.

No smoking — on Croswell Track across from Blake Fitness Center.

Triangle Fitness Center — open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mondays-working Fridays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. compressed work schedule Fridays and weekends; closed holidays. For more information, call 377-3056.

Blake Fitness Center — open 4:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Mondays-working Fridays; 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. compressed work schedule Fridays; 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekends and holidays.

Dragon Fitness Center — Due to water damage to the basketball court, the center's hours have been extended to accommodate customers who wish to play full-court basketball: 6 a.m.-10:30 p.m. Mondays-working Friday; 8 a.m.-1 p.m. non-working Friday and Saturdays. Parent-child fitness room has workout equipment and play area for ages 6 months to 7 years. For more information, call 377-4385.

Golf

Twilight special — 2 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays. Pay one price and golf until closing; E1-E4 \$12, E5-O3 \$20, O4-up \$22, guests \$22.

Nonprior service student special — show phase card or UBU card. Greens fee and cart, \$15 for 18 holes, \$10 for nine holes; add \$5 for rental clubs.

Golf lessons — \$25 for 30 minutes. For appointment, call 424-0479.

Outdoor recreation

Paddle boats for rent — two-person and four-person paddle boats for \$5 per hour for a minimum of two hours; first hour free through November. For more information, call 377-3160.

Catamaran sailboat for rent — \$10 per hour, minimum 2 hours, or

\$75 per day. Trailer and take-off site \$100 per day or \$175 for a weekend. Must be sailboat certified.

Camping packages — available, including sleeping bags, lanterns, camp stoves and tents.

Canoes, kayaks — for rent.

Rental campers — \$50 day. Two available; one sleeps six, one sleeps eight. For more information and towing requirements, call 377-3160.

Back Bay fishing trip — \$20 per person. State fishing license required; minimum four, maximum six people. For more information, call 377-3160.

One-day fishing trips — to Horn, Ship or Cat Islands; pick the date. Charter trip in Delacroix and Reggio, La., with professional fishing guide. For more information, call 377-3160.

Delacroix, La. fishing site — Outdoor fishing/hunting camp in Delacroix, La. Rent a self-contained camper, sleeps four, \$50/night, \$125/weekend (Friday noon to Monday noon) or \$300/week (seven days noon to noon). Bring food, beverages, cooking utensils, and sleeping bag or bedding. Louisiana license is needed for fishing. For more information, call 377-3160.

Pontoon boat training — test to become certified to rent a pontoon. For more information, call 377-3160.

Nonprior service student special — 35000 Trek seven-speed bikes, \$5 day on nonworking Friday, Saturday and Sunday, or Saturday/Sunday.

Wet slip fees — monthly, 32 feet plus, \$3.75 per foot; under 32 feet, \$2.50 per foot. Overnight, \$5 per boat.

Deep sea fishing trips — Nonworking Fridays and Sundays on the Keesler Dolphin II. \$75 per person includes everything you need to fish. Payment due upon reservation. Minimum 10, maximum 22 people. For more information and to reserve, call 377-3160.

Deep sea fishing private charter — rent Dolphin II, \$750 for first 10 people, \$50 each additional person. No license needed. \$100 deposit.

17-foot Back Bay cruiser for rent — Mississippi boater registration card required. For more information or for prices, call 377-3160.

Marina park pavilions — to reserve, call 377-3160.

Rent a bicycle — 3500 Trek, seven speed, \$3 day, \$15 week, \$35 month.

RV, boat and trailer storage — \$20 per month.

Resale area — snacks, beverages, fishing and rental equipment, hunting and fishing licenses.



TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Connett shares excitement of training mission



Photo by Adam Bond

Colonel Connett assumed command of the 81st TRG June 25.

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News editor

When she was at Keesler five years ago as 81st Mission Support Squadron commander, Col. Lynn Connett was “one of those folks working hard behind the scenes.” Now that she’s the 81st Training Group commander, “I find myself at the center table — it’s almost surreal.”

Colonel Connett’s journey back to Keesler took her through a position on the assignment floor at the Air Force Personnel Center, a year at National War College and an Air Staff position in which she helped develop new career development opportunities for civilians.

“I felt more prepared coming into this position than any other job I’ve had in the Air Force,” said Colonel Connett, who assumed command of the 81st TRG June 25. “I can tie every job I’ve ever had to this Air Force mission. The opportunity to lead the MSS enabled me to understand the 81st Training Wing organization. While assigned to Air Education and Training Command headquarters, I learned the dynamics of the command’s strategic mission — recruiting, training and education. Then fast forward to Air Staff and the work I was involved in with force development. Each of those positions, and others, prepared me for the training group’s mission.”

In her new position, she speaks to a variety of different audiences, but her key message remains the same.

“Whether they’re students or instructors, they’re training group members,” she emphasizes. “Everything we do makes a difference, not just for today but long term. We are truly building our next generation of Airmen. What we do today will ripple through the Air Force for the next five, 10, 15, 20 years.

“You’re laying the groundwork and growing tomorrow’s leaders for the operational Air Force,” she reminds her training team. “Today’s airman basic may someday be a chief. That young second lieutenant will be one of tomorrow’s senior leaders.”

While at the Pentagon, Colonel Connett learned that training for military members is a very deliberate, synchronized process — right time, right place, right opportunities.

“They come to Keesler for initial skills training, they come back for upgrade training,” she explained. “They may come back for advanced training or cross-training. We’ll touch Airmen through their entire careers, to get them ready for that next level of leadership and to take over as our old-timers prepare to walk out the door.”

Not long ago, Colonel Connett heard a comment at a retirement ceremony, “I have fewer years ahead of me than I do behind me in my career.” That realization is guiding her leadership path at Keesler.

“I have 22 years in the Air Force — I have fewer years ahead of me than behind me,” she remarked. “Now I’m in a position to ask, ‘How can I help the Airmen behind me to be ready for the challenges that will face them? How can we put them on the right track?’”

One of Colonel Connett’s favorite parts of her job is welcoming nonprior service Airmen to Keesler each week.

“I ask all the new force support, personnel or manpower students to stand up,” said the colonel as she focuses for a moment on perhaps a dozen students moving into her own functional community. “I tell them, ‘Welcome to the Air Force’s best (Air Force Specialty Code). Here’s why we’re important to the Air Force mission.’”

“Then I look at the rest of them and say, ‘When you get out of tech training at Keesler, I hope you’ll be able to articulate to me why your AFSC is the best in the Air Force and why it’s the most important career field in the Air Force,’” she continued. “We all support the operational Air Force mission, and if you can’t understand why it’s important for you to go to work every day, if you can’t tie what you do directly to the mission, you don’t need to be here.”

Colonel Connett also considers wise use of technology resources to be one of the most significant challenges for the 81st TRG.

“We must take the newest technology available and integrate it into training to make our work more effective and efficient, not just because it’s there,” she emphasized. “There may be courses where e-books are the right way to go; there are other courses for which you want that hard-copy paper-bound book. The same goes for distance learning — some courses lend themselves to this approach, but others don’t. We have to use the technology to deliver the courses that train the individual more efficiently and effectively, not just technology for technology’s sake.”

Colonel Connett stressed that it’s important to remember that Keesler’s training mission doesn’t exist in a vacuum.

“The training group needs the mission support group, the medical group — we need every single person on this base to help us do our mission,” she pointed out. “Since I’ve returned to Keesler, all I’ve seen are fantastic working relationships with the entire wing focused on ensuring that our training mission is accomplished. This is an incredible opportunity and I’m honored to be here.”

On a personal note, Colonel Connett is married to Lt. Col. Jay Stone, a clinical psychologist in the 81st Medical Operations Squadron’s mental health flight. They have three children.

“My husband is preparing to deploy to Southwest Asia for six months,” she said. “When we were in Washington, he helped establish policy for the treatment of post traumatic stress disorder. This is going to be an incredible opportunity for him.”

Civilian force development Shifting demographics lead to new 'roadmap'

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News editor

When Col. Lynn Connett became commander of the 81st Training Group June 25, she brought a wealth of civilian force development expertise to Keesler with her.

Two years in the Air Force's force development directorate at the Pentagon made her keenly aware of the importance of offering civilians the opportunity to develop institutional competencies at the right time in their careers.

The day after Colonel Connett assumed her new duties at Keesler, Air Force Secretary Michael Donley and Air Force Chief of Staff Norton Schwartz launched a new civilian development "roadmap" to help the Air Force's 143,000 civilians excel professionally while working to achieve the Air Force mission.

"As the Air Force moves forward, we find ourselves facing a dynamic set of new challenges," said Secretary Donley and General Schwartz in their June 26 letter. "To meet these challenges, we increasingly rely on our Air Force civilians as part of the total force team. As the responsibilities of our civilian work force have increased, so has the need for civilian force development."

"Air Force senior leadership recognized that our demographics have changed," Colonel Connett remarked. "As we've drawn down on the military side of the house, the civilian side may not have grown, but it hasn't drawn down with us. This means that civilians are finding more opportunities for leadership positions than ever before. For the first time, we have more civilian field-grade equivalents than we

have field grade officers."

Colonel Connett said the Air Staff recognized that civilian leaders weren't being grown in the same deliberate way that military leaders are.

"For decades, we've had a very deliberate process for developing our officers and enlisted personnel — we know what it takes to build a second lieutenant into a colonel or an airman basic into a chief," she explained. "A key tool in that development is professional military education. PME has been linked to the institutional competencies we want for our senior leaders.

"The question is how do we build that young (General Schedule) employee into that GS-15 or Senior Executive Service professional," the colonel said. "There wasn't a consolidated answer — it was a more haphazard process. It wasn't that civilians weren't being looked at, but the process hadn't been synchronized to the level that we had for our military members."

The reality that civilians enter the Air Force at various grades and skill levels and have a wide range of experiences poses different challenges than military force development.

"When we say Airmen, that includes enlisted, officers and civilians," Colonel Connett stressed. "We need specific competencies for our leaders — strategic thinking capabilities, communication capabilities, management capabilities, financial management capabilities. That's what PME brings to the table."

The new civilian roadmap includes a computer-based training orientation program for new employees, opportunities for continuous self-initiated personal and leadership development, highly-encour-

Trainer tackles Squadron Officer School

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News editor

Attending Squadron Officer School is Joel Riley's latest accomplishment as a civilian trainer in the 334th Training Squadron.

Mr. Riley, an instructional system specialist in the airfield operations training flight, has spent 13 years at Keesler. He joined the civilian ranks nearly eight years ago after retiring as a senior master sergeant with 22 years of active duty.

He received a bachelor of science degree in professional aeronautics through Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. Through the Community College of the Air Force, he earned two associate degrees, airway science and instructor of technology and military science, and occupational instructor certification. He's also accomplished master instructor certification.

Attending SOS is the first civilian force development opportunity Mr. Riley has pursued. He thought the five-week course which began July 27 would enhance his career progression by make him more marketable.

"SOS enabled me to strengthen my leadership and problem-solving techniques which will directly influence my section success," Mr. Riley pointed out.

"Another big benefit of SOS was the daily physical fitness training," he continued. "I was in the first class that required all civilians to pass, with a score of 75 or above, the military physical fitness test prior to attending SOS."

Mr. Riley said taking SOS in residence "is a must. Having the chance to bond with a group of Air Force officers and experience the camaraderie far exceeds reading a book.



Photo by Kemberly Groue

Mr. Riley, left, and Staff Sgt. Scott Ross, a 334th TRS instructor, verify that an airfield management lab script meets Air Force standards.

"If a unique opportunity like this comes along again at the right time, I'd like to follow it," he added. "I'm grateful to my leadership for giving me the opportunity to attend SOS."

aged expectation to complete non-residence professional military education at the appropriate level and opportunities for attendance at Civilian Acculturation and Leadership Training at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

The mandatory online new employee orientation provides an introduction to the

Air Force's organizational structure, core values, history and tradition.

"CALT is a two-week in-residence 'bluing' program hosted by Air University," Colonel Connett said. "Participants live and eat in the Officer Training School facilities. CALT's focus is leadership development and the program

provides hands-on opportunities, field exercises, leadership labs and war-gaming exercises that give civilians a better feel for the operational Air Force."

A hundred individuals participated in the pilot CALT program in fiscal 2009.

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"Feedback was phenomenal," Colonel Connett recalled. "We got responses like, 'Wow! I didn't know this about the Air Force,' and 'I feel a stronger commitment to the Air Force, a stronger understanding of what I'm doing for this institution — I see a future for myself.'"

The first CALT session begins Oct. 26, but seven other class dates are offered during fiscal 2010. For more information, log on to AFPC's "Ask" site, with "CALT" for the key word search, or call the Total Force Service Center, 1-800-525-0105.

"We need to encourage civilians to enroll in professional military education opportunities such as Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College and Air War College," Colonel Connett said. "Resources limit the number that can attend in residence, but distance learning is an inexpensive way to open up these courses."

According to the colonel, ACSC's distance learning program "is a phenomenal opportunity for civilians and military to earn a master's degree, complete intermediate developmental education and obtain joint PME credit required for career progression. One experience — three checks."

Colonel Connett dispelled the notion that to advance in civilian leadership, employees have to be mobile.

"That's not the truth at all," she emphasized. "We have civilians who want to move around, but we also have many employed in local wings and local major commands, who provide mission continuity with roots tied to the community, and that's where they want to stay. Regardless of the path taken, leadership opportunities will be available and our civilians need to be developed, they need to understand the institution they're working for ... the basics, the culture, the core values, the mission."

Paige Hughes, Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs, contributed to this report.

Distance learning offers 'unbeatable return for time spent'

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News editor

Anthony Voitalla found the perfect vehicle to further his professional education while maintaining his duties at Keesler — the Air Command and Staff College distance learning program.

On the civilian side, Mr. Voitalla is the 338th Training Squadron's training development element chief. On the military side, he serves as the 403rd Wing's command chief master sergeant.

"The ACSC online program is the perfect vehicle for me to receive my professional military education and still maintain my responsibilities here," said Mr. Voitalla, who served on active duty with the Army for 11 years before joining the 403rd Wing as a traditional reservist 16 years ago. He's been involved in training as a civilian at Keesler for 15 years.

Mr. Voitalla, who attended Squadron Officer School in residence, would have preferred to pursue ACSC in residence, too, but "I don't want to adversely impact my duty section. I have a responsibility here with the 338th and don't want to abandon it for a year."

He remarked that the ACSC online program offers an unbeatable return on the time spent for career development.

"The online program also affords three key benefits with one set of courses," he pointed out. "First, I'll attain my master's degree. Second, I'll receive my mid-level PME credit for civil service. Third, I'll also receive a joint PME credit."

Mr. Voitalla began ACSC about a year ago and hopes to complete the program by the end of next year. The program includes 11 eight-week classes.

"Each student submits for a request to take a class, and we rank order our preferences from the courses available," he explained. "We're notified about two weeks prior to the course so we can purchase the required books. Each week is scheduled with lessons linked to materials online — about 200-250 pages of required material per week."



Photo by Kemberly Groue

Linus Clark, left, and Steve Proctor, right, discuss the Defense Connect Online collaborative network 7-level course with Mr. Voitalla. All three work in the 338th TRS.

recently, he completed Franklin Covey's Leading at the Speed of Trust course and is now qualified to teach the course.

"I'm a strong advocate of professional development," Mr. Voitalla said. "As a middle-management civilian and a senior leader on the military side, I see the effects of PME within the forces. I know personnel are better for the training — once they attend, they're pumped up. Everyone I have out-briefed has said that although it was hard, they'd do it again."

"These upper courses also help me, on the military side, to better understand the challenges facing commanders," he added. "It makes me a better adviser to (Brig. Gen. James Muscatell, 403rd Wing commander) and furthers my breadth of experience. I'm a better leader with increased understanding of tactical, operational and strategic concepts and applications."

The 403rd Wing's top enlisted leader strongly recommended that people attend PME as soon and as often as they can.

"I review many promotion rosters, and this is the one area where the Airman has near complete control, especially within the reserves," he emphasized. "Yet many choose to put off this most important part of their own development. Too many careers have been hindered by this most basic requirement that individuals can control."

After he retires from the reserves, Mr. Voitalla hopes to pursue a career-broadening assignment at the Pentagon.

"A discussion question is required for each unit with a response and a critique of two other posts," he continued. "The discussions get quite involved and often open great debate of the materials. Each course also has a short paper, a PowerPoint briefing we prepare and a long paper for the final exam."

Mr. Voitalla has taken advantage of many opportunities to broaden his professional value to the Air Force. In addition to ACSC and SOS, he's earned several Community College of the Air Force degrees and a bachelor's degree in technical and occupational education from the University of Southern Mississippi. Most